

United States and European Students' Social-Networking Site Activities and Academic Performance

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ABSTRACT

Different cultures communicate differently. Research is beginning to examine the differences in culture related to social-networking site (SNS) use. Differences in specific SNS activities related to academic performance among United States (US; $n = 446$) and European ($n = 394$) university students were examined. Moderated Multiple Regressions indicated that using SNSs for “career” and “school” were positively predictive of Grade Point Average (GPA) for both US and European students. For US students, “staying in touch with online friends” was negatively predictive. Results highlight the positive and negative relationships between various SNS activities and GPA, but specifically the use of SNSs for academic versus socialization purposes cross-culturally.

KEYWORDS

Academic Achievement, Country, Cross-Cultural Comparisons, Interaction, Moderated Multiple Regression, Multitasking, Online Social Networking, Post-Secondary Education, Socialization

INTRODUCTION

In the United States (US), people spend an extensive amount of time online (comScore, Inc., 2013a) on desktop, and increasingly mobile, platforms (comScore, Inc., 2014). Approximately one in every five minutes spent online is on social-networking sites (SNSs). Facebook®, for example, is third in worldwide website rank, accounting for five out of every six minutes spent on SNSs. Since its inception, Facebook® monthly active users have increased to 2.2 billion as of July 2014 (Edwards, 2014).

As it stands today, there are only seven cultural markets where Facebook® is not the leading social network, highlighting its global reach. In the US over the past year, the top visited web properties were Google® (191,363 unique visitors) followed by Yahoo (184,935 unique visitors), Microsoft Sites® (168,899), and Facebook® (149,602); however, Facebook® led in engagement with 10.8% minutes spent online out of all websites, and a dominant 83% of time out of all other SNSs (comScore, Inc., 2013a). In Europe (EU) in 2012, 408.3 million people used the Internet with their home or work computer (comScore, Inc., 2013b). The top visited web properties included Google® (375,260 unique visitors) followed by Facebook® (275,882 unique visitors). Additionally, 6.7 hours per person per month were spent on social media sites (i.e., social networks and blogs).